



For the Energy and Technology Committee
March 7, 2008 Public Hearing
Submitted by Lynn Taborsak, Climate Change Specialist
League of Women Voters of Connecticut

Comments on
**R.B. 5787, AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMIC, ENERGY AND
CLIMATE SECURITY and RB 588, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CAP AND TRADE
PROGRAM FOR EMISSIONS TRADING**

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut, with over 2,400 members across the state, is a non-partisan, political organization committed to effective public policy. The League provides testimony and comments on public policy issues based on positions derived from member study and consensus. We thank you in advance for your consideration of our comments.

Today we are providing comments on two raised bills. Raised Bill 5787 seeks to establish a Department of Clean Energy. The League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, and adequate financing and coordination among the different state agencies and levels of government. We also recognize that the state has moved beyond the need to just permit and regulate power plants. We support the establishment of a new department whose mission is focused on energy policy with goals and strategies that will give Connecticut residents energy security for decades to come.

Since the 1970s, the League has supported the use of a variety of energy sources, with an emphasis on energy efficient technologies. We believe that governmental policies and actions must encourage energy conservation and the use of renewable sources through research and development, financial incentives, rate-setting policies and mandatory standards, including standards for energy-efficient buildings, appliances and automobiles.

The new Energy Department will replace the Renewable Energy Investments Board and continue all of its functions. In addition, a single Energy Department has a greater likelihood of directing policy considerations and resources into energy planning, climate change impact, conservation, and efficiency than the current multi-department approach.

The second proposal, R.B. 588, An Act Establishing a Cap and Trade Program for Emissions provides an important incentive for power plants and other producers of greenhouse

gases to reduce their emissions below required levels. Under a cap and trade program, producers would be allowed to trade or sell their excess credits to a facility that can't reduce emissions enough to meet the DEP required standards. A cap and trade program, however, is not a "pass to pollute". We are requiring dramatic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions over the next 30 years. A well-designed cap and trade program can help facilities that cannot meet the mandatory reductions within the time allowed. The state Cap and Trade program, for instance, could require two tons of credits or allowances to offset one ton of emissions. A Cap and Trade Program also rewards facilities that reduce emissions beyond the required amount. Their "excess" reduction becomes an asset that they can keep, trade or sell. The result of a well-designed Cap and Trade Program will be lower emissions, better air quality and climate stability.

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